



The River Review

SPOKANE, WASHINGTON ★ JULY 13-18, 2009

Presented by the Paralyzed Veterans of America and the Department of Veterans Affairs

Photo Courtesy of Spokane Regional CVB/Alan Bisson

A Publication of the 29th National Veterans Wheelchair Games

Volume 1, Issue 4 — July 16, 2009

Our Newest Vets

Every year, close to 500 athletes attend the National Veterans Wheelchair Games. For many of them, it's something to train for, and look forward to year round. The Games have become a way of life for athletes who have attended for 20 plus years. For others, however, this year's Games is their first, marking the beginning of a journey towards new self-discovery.

More than 100 novices competed in last year's Games, and this year is no exception. Being a novice doesn't mean the athlete is newly injured or a certain age; it simply means the person is new to national competition. For example, the new participants this year range in age from 21 to 78, including 12 women.

Anthony Alegre, a 25-year-old Marine Corps combat-wounded Veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom, wants to see what he's made of. "The Wheelchair Games help build confidence, self esteem and motivate you to stay active," said Alegre. "It gives me renewed self-confidence to see what others with disabilities can do, and it makes me want to join them."

In 2004, Alegre was on patrol in Ramadi, Iraq, when his vehicle was hit by an IED. After being in a coma for two months, the only thing he could remember was waking up in the hospital. Since the injury, it has been an uphill battle to gain the confidence and determination he once had.

Our oldest newcomer, Lloyd Roberts, is a WWII Veteran looking for a way to stay physically and mentally fit. "This will be my first time competing in the National Veterans Wheelchair Games," said Roberts. "I feel the Games will be a confirmation to myself that I'm capable of being a winner. I also believe that this event will be beneficial to my mental and physical health."

No matter their reason for attending one thing is for certain, these newcomers didn't have to go it alone. They had the help of seasoned wheelchair Veterans to guide them along the way like Paul Stempel, 61, an Army combat Veteran of Vietnam. Stempel has competed in the Games seven times, and tries to be a good example for younger Veterans. "This year I'm competing in the Open division against younger Veterans rather than in my own age group, which is Masters, because I want to show the young guys that neither disability nor age limit us," said Stempel. "Limits are only what we allow them to be."

In a few days, the 2009 National Veterans Wheelchair Games will come to a close. The athletes who have entered as novices this year will have challenged themselves to reach new heights, find better ways to stay active and meet new friends. Some will walk away with well-deserved medals for all their hard work, but everyone will have a new life experience. Next year, these athletes will have the experience to show the 2010 novices the ropes.



Lloyd Roberts, World War II Veteran of Lynwood, Calif., is a novice at this year's Games.



Official Officials Officiate



As the whistles blow, another year gets under way. Our officials, those men and women in the blue shirts, are from various backgrounds and have arrived in Spokane from all over the United States. We have teachers, therapists, and golf-bum retirees; there's also a judge, a preacher, and a few VA employees to boot.

Some of them live in the same area and see each other often. Some get together and assist with local and state meets. Others see each other only once a year, during the Games. They hail from Virginia, Minnesota, Florida, Texas, Washington, California, Maryland, Indiana, Iowa, Georgia, Missouri, West Virginia, Colorado and Massachusetts.

They all volunteer their time to officiate each year. The excitement and the camaraderie – with each other and the Veterans – bring them back every time. Many of the officials have been with the Games since 1995 and a few of them were involved with the Games in some capacity even before that. Others have been

added as the Games have grown and have seen the Games continue grow into the multi-venue event that it is now. They know many of you from years past.

Our officials are certified in many of the sports they officiate and some even have international certifications and have participated in the Paralympics. During the year, you might have seen them at local track and field meets or basketball and quad rugby games in your region and this is how they maintain their certification. Although you may not always agree with their calls or decisions, we definitely bring in the “best of the best” to run the Wheelchair Games!

Whether it's behind the batter's box or calling a miscue, just remember that our officials give up their own time to volunteer at the Wheelchair Games because they probably love it as much as you do. Also, don't forget they also have the last word!

Thanks, officials!

Here is what some of our officials have to say:

“Never in my wildest dreams did I ever thought I would be barking orders to a bunch of GIs!!!” said head official for basketball, Pam Fox from Dallas, Texas.



“I look forward to officiating at the NVWG every year because I get energized by the experience for a year,” said Russ Laub, head Games official for table tennis from Waynesboro, Va. “To see the determination, passion, and spirit of the athletes at the games revitalizes my determination, passion, and spirit and I leave the Games a better person.”

“Being able to attend the Wheelchair Games is the highlight of my year,” said Jane Walsh, of Staunton, Va., head official for archery. It is such an honor to be a small part of an event that reaches so many Veterans, and it renews my faith in human nature every year I attend. Seeing families gather around and showing their support for their father, brother, mom or sister, husband or wife, is awe-inspiring. I learn something new every year. Thank you for letting me serve you, the Veteran, in my own small way.”



Chet Molinari, head bowling official from West Wareham, Mass. says, “It is apparent to any wheelchair sports official that the goals of athletes competing in wheelchair sports are no different than any other athletic competition. The desire to win, to do well, to finish or complete, are on the athlete's agenda. The fact that they are an inspiration is a bonus.”

Come on Out and Cheer!

The 2009 Kids Day at the Games will be held tomorrow at the Spokane Falls Community College from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Kids Day has been a yearly feature of the Games' program since the 21st National Games in New York City. Veteran athletes competing in the Games will again serve as mentors for local children with disabilities, introducing them to a few of the many sports and recreational opportunities available to them through adaptive sports and recreational programs. This year, the mentors will be instructing the children in slalom, T-ball and basketball.



Mentors will work firsthand with the children, teaching them not only the rules of the sports they play, but also about having confidence and pride in their abilities. At the end of the program, a special ceremony takes place where participating children are presented with their own medals by our athlete mentors, recognizing their accomplishments and good sportsmanship.

Our participating Veterans all know how much fun and beneficial sports can be and are looking forward to sharing their experiences and knowledge with the children of Spokane.

If you're in the area tomorrow, we urge you to stop by the Kids Day venue and cheer for our participating kids!



"Dr. Daniel Scott, Medical Director of the Wheelchair Games, is a staff physician at the VA Eastern Colorado Health Care System in Denver. Here's what he and his team have to say about today's topic."

Q ~ During the Games, many of us will be in the sun for most of the day. What can we do to make sure we're not overexposed? – Seeking Shade

A ~ Dear Shade: During the Games, it is important to remember the dangers of overexposure to the sun. The number of skin cancer cases in the United States has doubled over the past 15 years. It is now the second most common form of cancer causing 2,500 deaths annually.

The sun produces ultraviolet (UV) radiation which can cause damage to the surface of the skin, the structures inside the skin and the function of skin causing mutations in DNA skin cells. Although sunburn may appear to heal on the surface, deep down the damage remains. It is a myth that a tan is a sign of health. In fact, tanning is the way the skin protects itself from further damage.

Here are a few tips to stay safe:

- Wearing a wide-brimmed hat to protect your head and face.
- The color of your clothes affects the absorption of the sun's rays. Darker clothes absorb the UV rays. Tightly woven fabrics such as denim give better protection than knits, which allow the sun's rays to seep through between the threads.
- About 90 percent of the sun's ultraviolet rays can and will pass through the clouds. Follow sun-protection advice even when the sun isn't shining.
- Having a dark skin color does not protect you from skin cancer. The American Academy of Dermatology recommends that people of all skin colors take precautions against sun exposure.
- Proper use of sunscreen is a tricky task. If you normally burn after 20 minutes in the sun, SPF 15 should keep you safe for 15 times that long, five hours. But sunscreen protection weakens with time, especially on a humid day. Sweating will also weaken its protection. It's best to reapply sunscreen every few hours and right after swimming.
- Because sunscreen contains ingredients that lose potency over time, bottles that have been sitting on the shelf for more than a year may not provide adequate protection.
- Most importantly, always stay hydrated! The best fluids are water and sports drinks with electrolytes. Avoid caffeine and alcoholic beverages.

Dr. Dan (Today's Ghostwriter: Paul Ross)







Thursday, July 16



Thursday's Meal Hours SCC, Ballroom 100 A/B/C	
Breakfast	6 - 8 a.m.
Lunch	10:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
Dinner	4:30 - 6:30 p.m.

Breakfast

Scrambled eggs, hash brown potatoes, bacon, sausage, grilled ham, biscuits & gravy, oatmeal, cold cereal, fresh fruit, muffins, Danish, fresh juice, coffee, hot tea and milk

Today's Option:

Quiche

Lunch

Fresh salad bar (lettuce, cherry tomatoes, cheddar cheese, croutons, sunflower seeds, beets, assorted beans), potato salad, fresh vegetables, dinner rolls assorted desserts, coffee, iced tea with lemons and milk

Today's Option:

Fried Chicken or Small Lunch Steak and Mashed Potatoes

Dinner

Fresh salad bar (lettuce, cherry tomatoes, cheddar cheese, croutons, sunflower seeds, beets, assorted beans), potato salad, fresh vegetables, dinner rolls, assorted desserts, coffee, iced tea with lemons and milk

Today's Option:

Pork Loin or Stuffed Chicken Breast and Rice Pilaf

Meals for the Games end Saturday at lunch.

Those receiving complimentary meals will use a debit card issued by the Spokane Convention Center (SCC). The cards are loaded daily with a balance of \$46 for today, \$30 Friday and \$26 Saturday. Any amount not used will be zeroed out at the end of the day. Debit cards can be used at the concession stands or in the Games cafeteria located in SCC, Ballroom 100 A/B/C.

SCC concession stands are located in the back of Group Health Exhibit A and in Riverside Hall D. Food available includes: muffins, Danish, bagels, cookies, soft drinks, juice, coffee, yogurt, milk, pretzels, nachos, french fries, bratwurst, German sausage, hamburgers, grilled chicken breasts, deli sandwiches, chef salad and kettle chips.

Please watch *The River Review* daily for more information on the daily menu and the meal exceptions Friday and Saturday.

Correction on the Paralympians Story from Tuesday:

Our apologies, we forgot to mention Laura Schwanger, an Army Veteran, was among the athletes competing this week who was on the U.S. Paralympic Team last summer as well as previous years.



REMINDER!

All competitors must wear their athlete number on the front of their shirts during competition!



Don't leave the Games without your memorabilia items! Visit Convention Center, Room 103 for fantastic hats, towels, sports bags, mugs, water bottles, shirts and more.

What Does The "G" In Slalom Super G Stand For?



No one is sure, but a few possibilities are Gangbusters (the way you'll need to move), Gargantuan (the size of the ramps you'll be facing) or maybe just plain Grueling (for the challenges of today's course). Wheelchair slalom events have been going on since Tuesday, but at 3 p.m. today the best of the best in those previous competitions will take part in the Slalom Super G in Riverside C. Even if you're not competing yourself, plan to be a "fan in the stand" this afternoon to cheer on some of our amazing athletes as they tackle the steepest ramps, doors, barriers and surprises of unknown proportions. Don't miss this event!

Medical suites are located at the **Doubletree Hotel Room 1102 and Davenport Towers Room 2170**. They open daily at 7 a.m. and will close Saturday, July 18 at 10:30 p.m. Medical assistance will be available at all times.

For athletes staying at the Courtyard by Marriott, Fairfield Inn, Oxford Suites or TraveLodge, medical assistance will be available nightly from 11:30 p.m. to 7:30 a.m. If an athlete has a medical emergency during this time, call the hotel operator and they will communicate with the physician on-call. At other times Veterans should go to the medical suites located at the Doubletree, Davenport Towers or at the Spokane Convention Center (SCC).

The **medical suite at the SCC** opens daily at 7 a.m. until the last event at the SCC has ended each day. In the case of a life-threatening emergency, please have the hotel operator call 911.

Only registered athletes or registered volunteers on duty may be treated by Games' medical staff. A list of local emergency clinics and hospitals will be available for family members who need medical assistance.

Wheelchair Repair

The Wheelchair Repair Shop is located at the Doubletree Hotel Suite B and is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. through Saturday, July 18. Hours will be extended as necessary. Service for minor repairs will be available at the Spokane Convention Center and all off-site venues from 8 a.m., through the end of the final event. Wheelchair repair will also be present at airport departure times. If you need emergency wheelchair repair after hours, please call 993-6242.

Awards Presentation Schedule

Medals will be awarded in two ways:

1. For Team events with a clear first, second and third place, medals will be awarded at the venue immediately after the competition.

Awards will be presented immediately upon completion for the following events: Super G, Power Soccer, Basketball, Quad Rugby and Softball.

2. For events that require the results to be tabulated, medal presentations will be delayed. Medals for these events will be presented in the Convention Center, Riverside D, on the following dates and times. Once results are confirmed, they will be posted on the TV monitors located in the Convention Center.



Awards Schedule	
Thursday, July 16	9:30 a.m. - 8:30 p.m.
Friday, July 17	9:30 a.m. - 10 p.m.
Saturday, July 18	11 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Someone You Should Know...

The National Veterans Wheelchair Games bring together wheelchair athletes from all over the nation (and beyond), representing all branches of the military service. Take the time to meet as many as you can. Here is a little information about six of your fellow competitors at this week's Games. Take time to look them up, since they all are "Someone You Should Know." Today's column focuses on Veterans from various branches of the military.



This is David Dotson's first time at the Games. He is 32, lives in Henderson, Texas, and is an Army Veteran who served from 2001-

2005. Dotson is also a combat Veteran of Iraq. He said, "Your life does not stop because of your circumstances. You have to keep going on." In fact, one of Dotson's favorite sayings is, "just keep moving!" He certainly embodies that slogan as he challenges other competitors in shot-put, javelin, air guns and bowling.



Cory Anderson, 39, from Parkman, Ohio, is a Navy Veteran who likes to give back. In addition to participating in handcycling, swimming, bowling and air guns,

Anderson also enjoys volunteering at Kid's Day. He recognizes the importance of volunteers and said "I am continuously amazed at the quality of the volunteers who go to a new town each year and transform the city into a very friendly wheelchair culture and by educating the masses of how talented these athletes truly are." This is his sixth year competing in the Games.



Edwin Thomas is an 11-year Veteran of the British Royal Navy and this year marks his 14th year as an athlete! "We may have served dif-

ferent countries, but in the end we are all Veterans with one aim, the 29th National Veterans Wheelchair Games," Thomas said. In addition to being in the shot-put, discus, javelin, air guns and bowling events, he also is the Chairman of the British Team, responsible for getting British comrades to the event every year.



With 12 years of active duty in the Air Force and 10 years in the Air National Guard, Rosemary Cahill is excited about her sixth year as an athlete. "The Games allow you to reach beyond

your disabilities to find our real abilities," she explained when asked what the Games mean to her. She also said that in "her book" recreational therapy is way up there as it brings great benefits and a "painful smile" of satisfaction. Look for her at the air rifles, stick bowling, table tennis and 9-ball competitions. Cahill, 53, lives in Yarmouth Port, Mass., (but she celebrates another birthday here in Spokane on Wednesday!)



Another first time athlete to the Games, Shawn Shoen, 37, from Fairmont, Minn., is a Marine on a mission. When asked why he decided to come this year, Shoen said, "People have

been trying to get me to go for the last three years and I just decided to go." He's been looking forward to softball, bowling and air guns and said, "I've looked forward to seeing my fellow Veterans in action. I've hoped to broaden my horizons on my journey."



Tampa's Sidney Merced, 53, is a retiree of the Coast Guard who is returning to the Wheelchair Games for his seventh year, doing all four strokes in the swimming competitions. "The number

one thing for me is that you make friends, see them again and hug and talk," he said. Merced is constantly motivated by his fellow athletes and their abilities. "The National Veterans Wheelchair Games are an excellent motivational tool. I do everything possible to be at the Games every year and I learn new techniques for sports and how to take care of myself. I am a shy person, but the Games make me happy -- I talk more, make new friends and get to see old friends again too."



iCafé

Lost and Found

NVWG Web site...

Cartoon of the Day



Spirit of the Games

Have you nominated an athlete yet for the 2009 Spirit of the Games award? If you haven't it's not too late! One veteran athlete is selected every year at the National Veterans Wheelchair Games to be the recipient of the Spirit of the Games award. This honor is bestowed upon a competitor who has shown athletic excellence, sportsmanship and strength of character throughout the Games. Nomination forms are due by tomorrow at 10 a.m. and can be found, along with the ballot boxes, in the dining area as well as the main hospitality desk. Don't delay; fill out your nomination today!

Daily Transportation

There are two pick-up/drop-off sites at the Spokane Convention Center (SCC): the Hub (the transportation hub located at the intersection of W. Spokane Falls Blvd. and N. Spokane Falls Ct.) and the back entrance. Hotel pick-up sites are at the main lobby entrances. *All pick-up/drop-off sites have signage placed by the Spokane Transit Authority (STA).*

Thursday Schedule:	
Departures sites	Time
Hotels to SCC Hub and back entrance, and return to Hotels	5:15 a.m. and every 15 minutes until 10 p.m.
The Hub to Lilac Lane and North Bowl Bowling	7 until 8:30 a.m., every 15 minutes
Lilac Lane and North Bowl Bowling to Hub	9:30 – 11 a.m., every 15 minutes
The Hub to Esmeralda Golf Course	7 – 8:30 a.m., every 15 minutes
Esmeralda Golf Course to the Hub	11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m., every 15 minutes
The Hub to Spokane Gun Club	11 a.m. – 2:30 p.m., every 15 minutes
Spokane Gun Club to the Hub	2:30 – 5 p.m., every 15 minutes
Last bus departs Hub to hotels	10:30 p.m.
Last Volunteer shuttle	11 p.m.